

Review Essay

## Hearts and Minds

### The Unconventional Cold War

❖ Kenneth A. Osgood

Nancy Bernhard, *U.S. Television News and Cold War Propaganda, 1947–1960*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999. xix + 245 pp. \$74.95.

Peter Grose, *Operation Rollback: America's Secret War behind the Iron Curtain*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000. ix + 256 pp. \$15.00.

Scott Lucas, *Freedom's War: The American Crusade against the Soviet Union*. Washington Square, NY: New York University Press, 1999. xii + 301 pp. \$45.00.

Gregory Mitrovich, *Undermining the Kremlin: America's Strategy to Subvert the Soviet Bloc, 1947–1956*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000. x + 235 pp. \$33.95.

Arch Puddington, *Broadcasting Freedom: The Cold War Triumph of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty*. Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2000. xix + 382 pp. \$27.50.

Frances Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters*. New York: The New Press, 1999. ix + 509 pp. \$29.95.

In the 1940s, *psychological warfare* and *political warfare* entered the American lexicon as terms denoting mysterious and supposedly powerful instruments of national policy. Interest in these concepts developed during World War II, when psychological warfare was viewed as an accessory to military operations that could potentially save lives and expedite an allied victory. During the early Cold War, psychological warfare enthusiasts defined the practice and conduct of psychological warfare broadly to include any nonmilitary action taken to influence public opinion or to advance foreign policy interests. Covert operations, trade and economic aid, diplomacy, the threat of force, cultural and educational exchanges, and more traditional forms of propaganda were all seen as important instruments of psychological warfare. Psychological warfare was thus transformed into a “catch-all” formula that embraced disparate measures of intervention in the internal affairs of both hostile and friendly states.<sup>1</sup> It was often interpreted synonymously with “covert opera-

---

1. Mario del Pero, “The Cold War as a ‘Total Symbolic War’: United States Psychological Warfare” *Journal of Cold War Studies* Vol. 4, No. 2, Spring 2002, pp. 85–107  
© 2002 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology

tions,” including all unorthodox and unofficial measures employed in the Cold War effort. Psychological warfare had become, in essence, a synonym for *cold war*.

The definition is not merely of semantic importance. The Cold War, the works reviewed here remind us, was an ideological, psychological, and cultural contest for hearts and minds. American policy makers increasingly realized that the Cold War would be won or lost on the plane of public opinion, rather than by blood shed on the battlefield. The United States used both overt and covert actions to wage this battle for hearts and minds—both behind the Iron Curtain and within the Free World. Yet, until recently, much of what historians knew about Cold War propaganda and psychological warfare came from the reminiscences of participants and partisans. Few professional historians tackled Cold War propaganda as a unique subject of historical investigation; and fewer still incorporated psychological warfare, propaganda, and covert operations into the conventional narratives of the Cold War or of U.S. foreign policy. It is not difficult to see why. Many of these activities were highly classified state secrets. During the Cold War officials involved in the operations were reluctant to disclose classified information to investigators, and archival sources were even harder to come by.

The passage of time and the end of the Cold War helped change all of this by opening up once-classified documents in the United States to historical research. Of particular significance are the records of the Psychological Strategy Board and its successor, the Operations Coordinating Board. Materials from both organizations were declassified in the mid-1990s by the Truman and Eisenhower presidential libraries. Even the obsessively secretive Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) began releasing documentary records pertaining to its Cold War covert operations. The volume in the State Department’s *Foreign Relations of the United States* series on the establishment of the CIA has proved to be an invaluable source for historians investigating psychological warfare during the Truman administration.<sup>2</sup>

Yet the challenges of researching Cold War propaganda remain. Although the CIA has improved its document declassification policies, archival sources from the agency’s operations remain episodic, heavily sanitized, and fragmentary. The most important primary sources on the CIA remain memoirs, “confidential” interviews with former officials, and the congressional and journalistic investigations from the 1960s and 1970s. Documents from the

---

Plans in Italy During the 1950s,” paper presented to the Cold War History Group, University of California at Santa Barbara, 19–20 May 2000.

2. U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1945–1950: Emergence of the Intelligence Establishment* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1996). This volume is also available online at: [http://www.state.gov/www/about\\_state/history/intel/index.html](http://www.state.gov/www/about_state/history/intel/index.html).

official U.S. propaganda agency, the United States Information Agency (USIA), are likewise difficult to come by. Some documents are held at the USIA Historical Collection—a haphazard collection of documents and “information” materials located in a dingy basement of the Department of Education building. These records, along with those at the National Archives, are poorly organized and woefully incomplete. While the National Archives houses a strong collection of films, leaflets, and other propaganda materials prepared by USIA, the textual records that illuminate USIA policy and planning are unavailable.<sup>3</sup> The most important operational and policy-related documents from the agency remain housed at the National Records Center in Suitland, Maryland, where they are closed to researchers. Access to them comes only through Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests. Moreover, the recent transfer of the agency to the Department of State has placed its records in the hands of State Department FOIA officers unfamiliar with the materials and uncertain about what to do with the USIA records—records that, they concede, should have been sent to the National Archives decades ago. Making matters worse, the merger of the State Department and USIA has spawned a turf war over the USIA Historical Collection that may close these records as well.

Further complicating the picture is the fact that psychological warfare and propaganda were not the exclusive province of USIA or the CIA. Dozens of agencies participated in Cold War propaganda campaigns, including the National Security Council, the White House, the State Department, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Department of Defense, the Army, and the foreign economic assistance agencies (such as the Mutual Security Agency, the Foreign Operations Administration, and the Agency for International Development). In some cases, even agencies primarily concerned with domestic policy, like the Departments of Labor and Agriculture (not to mention the obvious Federal Civil Defense Administration), became involved in U.S. propaganda operations. In addition, many private organizations, nonprofit foundations, businesses, and ordinary Americans contributed to U.S. propaganda campaigns. The voluntarist and privately operated Advertising Council, for example, cooperated with the government in several Cold War campaigns promoting civil defense, the “ground observer corps,” and the Crusade for Freedom, a funding drive to support the CIA-orchestrated broadcasts of Radio Free Eu-

---

3. USIA records at the National Archives are in Record Group (RG) 306. Aside from propaganda materials, most of the textual records in RG 306 were generated by the agency’s Office of Research. These documents provide many insights into worldwide public-opinion trends and the propaganda concerns of the United States, but do little to illuminate USIA policy and planning. Some information on USIA policy and planning can be gleaned from the three boxes of USIS despatches to the State Department in RG 306, as well as from the State Department records in RG 59, Central Decimal Files, 511 series.

rope. The sheer number of organizations and institutions involved in Cold War propaganda will ensure that historians will have their hands full for years to come.<sup>4</sup>

The books reviewed here thus represent small pieces of a much larger puzzle, but they make important contributions to historical understanding of the once-neglected subjects of propaganda, psychological warfare, and other activities (both covert and overt) designed to influence “hearts and minds.” Perhaps because there is so much ground to cover, propaganda and psychological warfare have been spawning their own subfield of academic inquiry among diplomatic historians and journalists.<sup>5</sup> This growing body of literature challenges accepted orthodoxies and raises provocative new questions about Cold War history.



Looking back on the diplomatic practices of an earlier era, a report prepared by the State Department’s Policy Planning Staff (PPS) in the late 1950s noted that “foreign policy was once implemented primarily by diplomats” and that a country’s interests were promoted almost exclusively by professional diplomats who relied on discussion and negotiation as the conventional tools of the trade. The report then claimed that “all this has changed in recent years.” The

---

4. I am presently at work on a history of U.S. propaganda and psychological warfare during the Eisenhower administration. The study will explore the impact of psychological warfare on U.S. foreign policy during this period and analyze U.S. propaganda towards allies, neutrals, and domestic audiences. It is based on my dissertation: Kenneth A. Osgood, “Total Cold War: U.S. Propaganda in the ‘Free World’, 1953–1960” (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Santa Barbara, 2001).

5. Other recent studies include Walter L. Hixson, *Parting the Curtain: Propaganda, Culture, and the Cold War* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997); Gary D. Rawnsley, *Radio Diplomacy and Propaganda: The BBC and VOA in International Politics, 1945–64* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996); Gary D. Rawnsley, ed., *Cold War Propaganda in the 1950s* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999); Paul Lashmar and James Oliver, *Britain’s Secret Propaganda War, 1948–1977* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing Limited, 1998); Guy Oakes, *The Imaginary War: Civil Defense and American Cold War Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); Caroline Page, *U.S. Official Propaganda during the Vietnam War, 1965–1973: The Limits of Persuasion* (London: Leicester University Press, 1996); Esko Salminen, *The Silenced Media: The Propaganda War between Russia and the West in Northern Europe* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999); Reinhold Wagnleitner, *Coca-Colonization and the Cold War: The Cultural Mission of the United States in Austria after the Second World War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994); Christopher Simpson, *Science of Coercion: Communication Research and Psychological Warfare, 1945–1960* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); László Borhi, “Rollback, Liberation, Containment, or Inaction: U.S. Policy and Eastern Europe in the 1950s,” *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (Fall 1999), pp. 67–110; Mark Haefele, “John F. Kennedy, USIA, and World Public Opinion,” *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (Winter 2001), pp. 63–84; Kenneth A. Osgood, “Form before Substance: Eisenhower’s Commitment to Psychological Warfare and Negotiations with the Enemy,” *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (Summer 2000), pp. 405–434; Allan A. Needell, “‘Truth is Our Weapon’: Project TROY, Political Warfare, and Government-Academic Relations in the National Security State,” *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (Summer 1993), pp. 399–420; and Laura Belmonte, “Defending a Way of Life: American Propaganda and the Cold War, 1945–1959” (Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 1996).

target of diplomacy had widened beyond foreign policy elites and professional diplomats to include international opinion. The report emphasized that if the United States could win popular opinion to its side, this would put pressure on foreign governments and create a favorable atmosphere for U.S. policies. “Convincing a foreign official is often less important than carrying an issue over his head to his people, to public opinion in the country he represents,” the report explained. “The people will influence the official’s action more than he will influence theirs.” The PPS study recommended a “concentrated effort” on the part of U.S. officials to select the most appropriate terms to describe issues and events bearing on U.S. foreign policy to “do cheaply just what propaganda is supposed to do”: influence public opinion.<sup>6</sup> Although the study was written at the end of the 1950s, it was advocating something that diplomats and politicians were already doing (and still do): selecting words and phrases (now often called “buzzwords”) to sell policies to international and domestic opinion.

Containment was many things, but it was also one of those words. It allowed U.S. officials to package U.S. foreign policy objectives so that they appeared noble, restrained, and fundamentally defensive. Yet the books reviewed here reveal another dimension of U.S. foreign policy that fit neither the label “containment” nor the restrained and defensive image that containment evoked. Beginning in 1948 the Truman administration approved a wide range of covert activities designed to bring about the liberation of Eastern Europe and the rollback of Soviet power. Although the policies of “liberation” and “rollback” are commonly associated with the Republican administration of Dwight D. Eisenhower, which campaigned in 1952 against the “immoral” and “futile” policy of containment, it is now indisputable that Harry Truman’s Democratic administration inaugurated a provocative form of rollback years earlier.

Indeed, as Peter Grose and Gregory Mitrovich reveal in *Operation Rollback* and *Undermining the Kremlin*, George F. Kennan, the so-called “father of containment,” was also the driving force behind a series of aggressive measures of psychological warfare designed to foment trouble behind the Iron Curtain. Kennan explained the idea of containment to the public in the famous article he wrote for *Foreign Affairs* in July 1947 under the pseudonym “X.” The article advocated “a long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies.” Conservative critics immediately charged that containment was an overly defensive strategy that would abandon Eastern Europe to Soviet totalitarianism. In reality, containment was not

---

6. Policy Planning Staff, “Semantics in Foreign Policy,” 24 February 1958, Record Group 59, PPS Records 1957–61, Lot 67 D548, Box 120, “Information Policy,” National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

the purely defensive strategy that Kennan's critics supposed. Even while containment was being condemned as appeasement, Kennan was working secretly to develop an idea that he mentioned in the article but that escaped the attention of many of his critics. He had argued that the United States should apply the "adroit and vigilant application of counter-force at a series of constantly shifting geographical and political points." Kennan did not clarify precisely what he meant by "counter-force," but the recently declassified documents cited by Grose and Mitrovich reveal that he advocated an aggressive program of clandestine warfare against Communism, involving propaganda, sabotage, subversion, and paramilitary engagement.

From 1948 until his departure from government in mid-1950, Kennan was heavily involved in covert planning and psychological warfare efforts behind the Iron Curtain. In early 1948 Kennan, who was then serving as the head of the State Department's Policy Planning Staff, developed a plan for "organized political warfare" against Communism. The plan, set forth in a policy paper prepared for the National Security Council, NSC 10/2, committed the United States to what Grose describes as an "unprecedented program of counterforce against communism." The document went beyond mere propaganda and psychological warfare to authorize "preventive direct action, including sabotage, anti-sabotage, demolition and evacuation measures," as well as "subversion against hostile states, including assistance to underground resistance movements, guerrillas and refugee liberation groups" (p. 8).

President Truman approved NSC 10/2 in June 1948 and authorized the creation of the Office of Policy Coordination (OPC)—a euphemistically titled organization attached to the CIA and authorized to engage in clandestine operations. Over the next three years the OPC grew substantially. In 1949 the OPC employed only 302 people, but by 1952 the number had grown to 2,812 with an additional 3,142 operatives under contract. The OPC's budget likewise exploded from \$4.7 million in 1949 to \$82 million by 1952.

The OPC's first director was Frank G. Wisner, a lawyer from Mississippi and a veteran of the Office of Strategic Services. Wisner was appointed to the OPC in August 1948 after future spymaster Allen Dulles declined the position. A few months later Wisner devised a list of possible operations for the OPC. According to a document cited by Grose, the list proposed several distinct programs of clandestine political warfare in four categories:

- Psychological warfare: "direct mail, point pen, rumors, etc."
- Political warfare: "support of resistance (underground), support of DPs [displaced persons] and refugees, support of anticommunists in free countries, encouragement of defection."

- Economic warfare: “commodity operations (clandestine preclusive buying, market manipulation and black market operations)” and “fiscal operations (currency speculation, counterfeiting, etc.).”
- Preventive direct action: “support of guerrillas, sabotage, counter-sabotage and demolition, evacuation and stay-behind[s].” In a telling comment, Kennan described Wisner’s list as “the minimum of what is required” (p. 124).

Details regarding many of the OPC’s operations remain classified, but Grose and Mitrovich piece together information from a variety of sources to paint a fascinating picture of the unconventional Cold War. Through the OPC, Mitrovich notes, the Truman administration developed operations designed to harness the energies of disaffected émigrés into a resistance force against the Soviet Union, incapacitate the administrative structure of the Communist Party in the USSR and the East European states, encourage defections to the West, induce power struggles and exacerbate personal rivalries within the Communist leadership, and accentuate divisions between the Soviet Union and the other Communist states. Grose shows that these anti-Soviet operations went far beyond leaflet drops and radio broadcasts to include outright paramilitary actions: guerrilla units, sabotage forces, and other subversive efforts to support resistance movements behind the Iron Curtain. Among the most interesting activities described in *Operation Rollback* were the infiltration missions sponsored by the OPC. Émigrés from Russia, Ukraine, Romania, Hungary, Albania, Czechoslovakia, Poland and elsewhere were dropped by unmarked U.S. warplanes at locations all along the length of the Iron Curtain to engage in various kinds of paramilitary operations. By Grose’s telling, these operations nearly always ended in disaster. In case after case the American-sponsored émigrés were discovered by the authorities, arrested, sentenced to decades in Siberian labor camps, or, in many cases, summarily executed.

From the start the American public was kept totally in the dark about these offensive operations against the Soviet bloc. Grose reveals, however, that Soviet intelligence learned about American plans for political warfare and rollback almost immediately. Shortly after the establishment of the OPC, news of the creation of a special office “for sabotage and terrorism in eastern Europe” appeared in, of all places, *Pravda*, which referred to the organization as “Organization X.” The title *Pravda* gave to the OPC was loaded with irony, Grose points out, since the brain behind the organization was none other than Mr. X himself, George Kennan (p. 121).

While Mitrovich and Grose explore aspects of the unconventional Cold War that have escaped the historical radar, Arch Puddington’s *Broadcasting*



*Freedom* examines the more familiar subjects of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty (RFE/RL).<sup>7</sup> The radio stations were covertly established by the Central Intelligence Agency as ostensibly private networks that broadcast “the truth” behind the Iron Curtain (RFE broadcast to Eastern Europe, RL to the Soviet Union). The radios were staffed by émigrés and exiled political leaders from the Soviet bloc, but the CIA maintained control over their broadcasts through the National Committee for a Free Europe (also known as the Free Europe Committee), an ostensibly private organization established by the agency to support émigré anti-Communist activities. The goal of RFE/RL, as Radio Free Europe’s policy manual stated, was “to contribute to the liberation of the nations imprisoned by the Iron Curtain by sustaining their morale and stimulating in them a spirit of non-cooperation with the Soviet-dominated regimes” (p. 43).

Puddington includes an illuminating discussion of some of the psywar techniques used by RFE/RL broadcasters during the 1950s, when the stations were committed to “a muscular brand of political warfare” (p. 14). One of RFE’s most popular radio programs was *Messages*, which regularly attacked prominent officials, cabinet ministers, and local Communist functionaries. In a 1951 broadcast the program singled out Vilmos Vizi, a Hungarian factory official and sexual predator, for a sensational attack. The commentator described his crimes against the young girls in his employ and then asked,

Aren’t you ashamed, Vilmos Vizi, of using the advantage originating in your party position not only to exploit physically the working women and to torture their minds, but to lay claim to their bodies in order to satisfy your filthy urges? . . . You are worse than a beast, Vilmos Vizi. . . . We know everything. We are watchful. (p. 49)

Puddington also shows how RFE manipulated anti-Semitism to sow suspicion and distrust within Communist Party ranks. Within the satellite governments, there was a widespread practice of naming Jewish Communists to highly unpopular positions, especially within the security apparatus, and then exploiting native anti-Semitism by blaming the Jews for repression and policy failures. RFE/RL broadcasters turned this tactic to the radio stations’ advantage by making special appeals to Jewish party members that stressed the insecurity of their positions. Broadcasters reported

that all party officials live a brief life of power, and that Jewish party officials live a shorter life of power than the rest. . . . [T]he Kremlin is prepared to sacrifice

---

7. Radio Liberty was originally named “Radio Liberation from Bolshevism” but changed its name in 1963.



any Jewish party leader, however brilliant, however great his past service to the party, on the altar of the Kremlin's plan for a Soviet-Nazi partnership against civilization. (p. 45)

In their daily programming the radios also did such things as encourage peasants to withhold grain, publicize defections and escapes, and play music banned by the governments (such as Christmas carols and jazz music).

The activities of the Free Europe Committee extended beyond mere radio propaganda in Eastern Europe. The RFE/RL operation also provided cover for a sophisticated propaganda campaign designed to drum up support for the Cold War at home. The CIA, legally barred from propagandizing among the American public, orchestrated a massive campaign to stimulate Cold War morale known as the Crusade for Freedom. The Crusade for Freedom purported to be a fund-raising drive to raise money for the RFE/RL broadcasts—to provide cover for the agency's radio stations by creating the appearance that they were funded by private contributions.

But, Puddington shows, the Crusade for Freedom was also a domestic propaganda campaign. It sought to whip up anti-Communist fervor and stir American patriotism by portraying the Cold War as a fight for the freedom of the “enslaved peoples” of Eastern Europe. The Advertising Council financed a multimillion-dollar advertising campaign asking Americans to “help truth fight Communism” by donating “freedom dollars” to the Crusade. Appeals from celebrities were heard on the radio, posters were plastered on buses and subways, and parades were organized stressing the theme of freedom for the satellite peoples. The Crusade's advertisements were “ubiquitous,” Puddington writes (p. 22). Indeed, as Christopher Simpson noted in his superbly researched 1988 study *Blowback*, the CIA's contributions to the Crusade for Freedom “made the CIA the largest single political advertiser on the American scene during the early 1950s.”<sup>8</sup>

Although Puddington does not mention it, RFE/RL and the Free Europe Committee also acted as conduits for the CIA to underwrite the anti-Communist work of the numerous émigré organizations that claimed to represent “governments-in-exile.” The Free Europe Committee, Simpson observed, “became the single most important pipeline through which the CIA passed money for émigré leaders.” Moreover, the radio broadcasts themselves were used as covers for a much broader range of intelligence and political warfare activities.<sup>9</sup>

---

8. Christopher Simpson, *Blowback: America's Recruitment of Nazis and Its Effects on the Cold War* (New York: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1988), p. 228.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 125–135.

Unlike the other authors reviewed here, Puddington writes approvingly of the U.S. government's covert propaganda programs. Having worked for RFE in the 1980s, Puddington brings to his study the perspective of an insider and a sympathetic observer. He explains the RFE/RL operations as being mere extensions of the containment doctrine, rather than as evidence of a commitment to liberation:

The logic of containment demanded a policy of creating complications for the Soviets within their own sphere of influence, since the more Moscow was preoccupied with keeping the restive peoples of Eastern Europe in check, the less likely it would be to cast a hungry eye on Western Europe. (p. 8)

He hesitates to accept RFE/RL as instruments for "rollback," but his very thesis (that RFE/RL helped bring about the fall of Communism and the eventual liberation of Eastern Europe) and the bulk of his evidence clearly point in the other direction; the radios were nothing if not working for the cause of "liberation."

Moreover, as Mitrovich argues forcefully in *Undermining the Kremlin*, the policy of "liberation" was firmly entrenched in U.S. national security policy. Mitrovich shows that through a series of policy papers approved in 1948, U.S. policy "shifted from solely a defense of the free world to the elimination of the Soviet Communist bloc altogether" (p. 8). Using dozens of recently declassified documents, Mitrovich also reevaluates the meaning of the important document NSC 68, the so-called American "blueprint" for the Cold War. For decades scholars have argued that NSC 68 inaugurated the "militarization of containment," transforming the Cold War into a military contest that went against Kennan's intended strategy of a "political" containment of Soviet expansion. Mitrovich, however, shows that the expansion of U.S. military capabilities authorized by NSC 68 coexisted with an intensification of the political and psychological offensive against the Soviet bloc. However, Mitrovich is careful to point out that this psychological-warfare offensive predated NSC 68 and was enshrined earlier in the NSC 10 and NSC 20 series approved two years before.

Perhaps more important, Mitrovich reveals that the covert operations sponsored by the CIA were not the actions of a "rogue" agency operating outside the boundaries of established national policy. He convincingly argues that "covert action and psychological warfare [were] important components of American foreign policy and an integral element of strategic planning at the highest levels" (p. 178). According to Mitrovich, "nearly all" the key national security strategists of the Truman and Eisenhower administrations actively supported psychological warfare and took a leading role in incorporating these techniques into U.S. policy (p. 10).

This is an important argument that needs to be taken seriously. The secret world of intelligence has been for too long detached from the central narrative of the Cold War—in part because of the fragmentary documentation and in part because intelligence history has often been perceived as “popular” history.<sup>10</sup> Many good studies of covert operations inadvertently reinforce the marginality of their research by either adopting the tone and style of an exposé or by neglecting to articulate the broader significance of their research. The tendency to focus on the interesting stories, the curious anecdotes, and the startling revelations from the archives makes for exciting reading, but it reinforces the perception that the unconventional Cold War was a sideshow to the traditional military, economic, and diplomatic aspects of the Cold War.

Taken together, however, the evidence from all of the books reviewed here points to a different conclusion: Propaganda, psychological warfare, and covert operations were critical instruments of U.S. foreign policy in the early Cold War. The “unconventional Cold War” was not a peripheral but a central aspect of the Cold War. As Mitrovich notes,

the cold war struggle, particularly from 1948 to 1956, began as a true war between the two camps with one side destined to emerge victorious over the other. . . . It was a war fought, however, by non-military methods—psychological warfare and covert action. (p. 181)

Mitrovich makes a good point, and historians of American foreign relations would be well-advised to integrate psychological warfare and covert operations into the narrative of Cold War history.



This is precisely what Scott Lucas set out to do in *Freedom’s War: The American Crusade against the Soviet Union*. The central thesis of the book is that the Cold War was a total war that required contributions from all sectors of American society. He writes, “The battle against Soviet Communism was not the exclusive domain, as most histories portray, of politicians, diplomats, and generals. It was waged at the front by covert operators and, more significantly, by private groups working with them” (p. 2). *Freedom’s War* is therefore much more than a history of propaganda, psychological warfare, and covert operations. It is a comprehensive account of the efforts of state and private groups to wage, and to win, the Cold War.

*Freedom’s War* includes numerous examples of labor organizations, entertainers, academics, nonprofit foundations, political action committees,

---

10. The quality research published by the journal *Intelligence and National Security* marks an important exception.

women's groups, and other private entities that contributed their services to the Cold War effort. Many of the connections Lucas investigates stemmed from the CIA, but many others arose from the discreet efforts of government officials to use their connections to promote particular ideas and policies. For example, the Committee on the Present Danger and the Citizen's Committee to Defend the Marshall Plan were both nongovernmental organizations, with close ties to the government, established to "sell" Cold War policies to the American people.

Lucas calls these linkages between the government and private groups a "state-private network." The book perhaps inadvertently adopts a conspiratorial tone in referring to the "state-private network," and at times *Freedom's War* reads like a prosecutor's indictment. Nevertheless, Lucas's investigation of the role of private actors in the American "crusade" against the Soviet Union is an important contribution. The fact that government officials in a democracy cooperated with private groups in the waging of the Cold War is itself not necessarily surprising, but Lucas reveals that it is an aspect of the Cold War that merits much more historical investigation than it has received.

Lucas is one of the first historians who have systematically investigated the records of the Psychological Strategy Board (PSB) and its successor, the Operations Coordinating Board (OCB), the psychological warfare planning bodies for the Truman and Eisenhower administrations respectively.<sup>11</sup> Although the records of the PSB and the OCB were declassified in the mid-1990s, Lucas acquired his documents through a lesser-known but highly useful source, the Declassified Documents Reference System (DDRS), which publishes declassified documents from the presidential libraries on microfiche and the Internet.<sup>12</sup> Although the DDRS has a maddeningly poor and inadequate system for indexing, Lucas thoroughly mined the catalog to locate hundreds of important documents from these institutions.

Lucas provides an especially useful "first look" at the activities of Eisenhower's OCB, which replaced the PSB in the fall of 1953. The OCB was a high-level interdepartmental body composed of the under secretaries of state

---

11. On the PSB, see also Mitrovich, *Undermining the Kremlin*; Scott Lucas, "Campaigns of Truth: The Psychological Strategy Board and American Ideology, 1951–1953," *International History Review*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (May 1996), pp. 279–302; Edward P. Lilly, "The Psychological Strategy Board and Its Predecessors: Foreign Policy Coordination 1938–1953," in Gaetano L. Vincitorio, ed., *Studies in Modern History* (New York: St. John's University Press, 1968), pp. 337–353; Sarah-Jane Corke, "Flexibility or Failure: Eastern Europe and the Dilemmas of Foreign Policy Coordination, 1948–1953" (paper presented at the conference of the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations, (SHAFR), Washington, D.C., June 1997); and Sarah-Jane Corke, "Bridging the Gap: Containment, Psychological Warfare and the Search for the Missing Link in American Cold War Policy, 1948–1953" (paper presented at the SHAFR conference, Philadelphia, June 1998).

12. The DDRS is now published online by Primary Source Media at: <http://www.ddrs.psmmedia.com>.

and defense, the directors of the CIA and USIA, and the president's special assistant for Cold War planning (psychological warfare). The OCB was charged with overseeing the "psychological" impact of U.S. policies, but the board's principal contribution to psychological warfare lay in its detailed operational planning. As an adjunct to the National Security Council, the OCB translated the broad objectives outlined by the NSC policy papers into operational plans. As the core planning body for operations that specified the instruments and techniques to be used in implementing national security policies, the OCB therefore exerted a considerable influence on U.S. foreign policy. Lucas effectively uses the records of the OCB to document U.S. operations around the world, from Latin America to Indochina, but he mistakenly reports that the OCB operated on a budget of \$450 million (p. 210). Since the OCB was a coordinating and planning body rather than an operational agency, its budget was insignificantly small. Presumably the \$450 million figure to which Lucas refers is the overall expenditure of the Eisenhower administration on activities to influence foreign opinion—excluding those of the CIA, for which we have no reliable figures.<sup>13</sup>

Lucas's analysis of U.S. national security planning is especially insightful, for he investigates NSC policies pertaining to "liberation" on two levels: the planning and "grand strategy" level and the operational level. By exploring in detail the operations carried out under the NSC policy papers, he is able to track the correlation between policy and action—a method of inquiry often overlooked by diplomatic historians concerned with the *making*, rather than the *implementation*, of policies. The result, Lucas finds, is that although NSC policy papers approved by the Eisenhower administration appeared to reject the policy of liberation, they did just the opposite at the operational level. Lucas revises the conventional wisdom that the Operation Solarium exercise conducted by the NSC in the fall of 1953 effectively ruled out the policy of rollback in favor of a true policy of "containment." The approval of NSC 162/2, the document that guided the implementation of Eisenhower's New Look national security policy, did "nothing" to resolve the question of whether, in fact, the United States would continue to use psychological warfare to chip away at the Soviet bloc. The vague language of this and other documents glossed over strong disagreements within the administration about

---

13. For an estimate of the total U.S. expenditures devoted to influencing international opinion, see "U.S. Resources for Foreign Communication and Political Warfare," 9 May 1960, Records of the President's Committee on Information Activities Abroad (Sprague Committee), Box 20, PCIAA No. 9, Eisenhower Library. It is worth noting that the USIA's budget accounted for only about a fifth of the total expenditures; USIA funding rarely exceeded \$125 million and was usually below \$100 million during the 1940s and 1950s.

the wisdom of anti-Communist psychological warfare and promoted a “policy of uncertainty” that allowed the psychological warfare enthusiasts to continue their operations.

Although the National Security Council, in Lucas’s words, officially kept “liberation at arm’s length” it “allowed the network of psychological warriors to persist” (p. 189). Technically, the NSC had decided by 1955 to stress “evolutionary rather than revolutionary change.” U.S. propaganda programs emphasized “the right of the peoples of Eastern Europe to independent governments of their own choosing,” but they were barred from encouraging open revolt and outright resistance. Radio Free Europe, for example, tried to strike a delicate balance between promoting “freedom” and revolution. But U.S. psychological warriors never addressed what Lucas calls the “the obvious question: how could Eastern European demand free elections and independence within a totalitarian system without a ‘revolutionary’ change?” (p. 251). Although the United States may not have explicitly instructed peoples behind the Iron Curtain to revolt, the logic of the RFE/RL broadcasts and the repeated pledges by representatives of the United States to support the eventual liberation of the satellites, clearly had revolutionary consequences. How could the United States encourage East Europeans to demand political and economic change without encouraging the overthrow of a Communist system that was preventing such change? Lucas convincingly points out that U.S. officials never adequately addressed these contradictions. Despite claims to the contrary, U.S. propaganda in Eastern Europe clearly pointed toward liberation. It took the brutal suppression of the Hungarian revolution by Soviet tanks in 1956 to produce a decisive policy by the NSC expressly denying “liberation.” By the fall of 1957 liberation had been replaced by a “gradual approach” that would rely on economic ties and cultural contacts to encourage a pro-Western outlook among the “enslaved” peoples of Eastern Europe.<sup>14</sup>

Although Lucas does not say as much, his analysis of the contradictions in U.S. propaganda policy raise questions about the so-called “evolutionary” strategy that emerged after the 1956 uprising in Hungary. Regardless of whether the RFE/RL broadcasts espoused open revolt, their very existence acted as a voice of opposition and served to undermine the legitimacy of the Communist governments in Eastern Europe. As Eisenhower’s staff secretary General Andrew J. Goodpaster recently commented to me in an interview, “the radios were subversive—no doubt about that!” The much heralded change from “revolution to evolution” looks more like a change in tone, style, and propaganda tactics than in overall policy and objectives. The United States may have backed away from some of the reckless provocations of the

---

14. This evolution in U.S. propaganda policy is ably explored in Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*.

early Cold War, but the ultimate long-term objective remained rolling back the Iron Curtain in Eastern Europe. Although this point may be obvious, none of these authors expressly mentions it.

As a whole, the authors paint a much more aggressive picture of American activities in the early Cold War than does the previous historiography. Scholars writing on the origins of the Cold War will have to be aware that not only the Soviet Union but also the United States acted aggressively during the early stages of the Cold War. The United States did indeed seek to “contain” Soviet expansion, but this “defensive” strategy developed simultaneously with an “offensive” strategy to roll back Soviet power. (Puddington does not say as much, but his research clearly points to the same conclusion.) These books make it difficult to argue with Mitrovich’s contention that “the cold war policies of the United States were far more complex than scholars have generally understood and can no longer be considered merely an extension of containment” (p. 177). Liberation and containment were two sides of the same coin.



Although psychological warfare in the Cold War context is often linked with aggressive campaigns to pierce the Iron Curtain, important propaganda activities of the United States took place on the other side of that curtain—in the so-called “free world.” Most of the resources of the USIA and CIA were directed outside Eastern Europe, and, beginning in the mid-1950s, an increasing amount of attention was spent “targeting” countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America with U.S. propaganda.

Although USIA assumed responsibility for the Voice of America, which broadcast predominantly to Communist countries, free-world audiences were clearly the main focus of the agency’s activities. The “strategic principles” that guided USIA operations stated: “We are in competition with Soviet Communism primarily for the opinion of the free world. We are (especially) concerned with the uncommitted, the wavering, the confused, the apathetic, or the doubtful within the free world.”<sup>15</sup> The agency oversaw more than 208 U.S. Information Service posts in 91 countries, none of them behind the iron or bamboo “curtains.” At the end of the 1950s, roughly 50 of these posts were in Europe, 34 in the Near East and South Asia, 40 in Latin America, 34 in Africa, and 50 in the Far East. Judging from the agency’s allocation of financial and personnel resources, USIA’s largest programs were in Germany, Austria, Japan, and India. In Germany in 1955 the USIS employed 152 Americans

---

15. “USIA Strategic Principles,” n.d. [March 1954], Operations Coordinating Board Central Files, Box 20, OCB 040 USIA (1), Eisenhower Library.



and 1,581 locals and spent about \$8 million annually. In Austria 40 Americans and 351 locals oversaw a \$2.5 million budget; in Japan 52 Americans and 303 locals were employed on an \$800,000 budget; and in India 56 Americans and 428 locals were given a budget of \$1 million. Other programs of comparable size were in Indochina (Vietnam), Thailand, France, and Italy. The USIS maintained sizable operations in Spain, Yugoslavia, Egypt, Greece, Iran, Mexico, Brazil, and Pakistan as well.<sup>16</sup> This global scope of the USIA was observed by the British Foreign Office in London. “The target of the USIA is not simply, or even preponderantly, public opinion within the Soviet Union or the Soviet Orbit,” one Foreign Office official observed. “The main target is public opinion in the non-Soviet world and particularly public opinion among those who are not fully committed to opposition to Soviet communism.”<sup>17</sup>

The Central Intelligence Agency, it is clear, also saw the non-Soviet world as an important target for political warfare. The CIA’s propaganda effort was, as John Prados observed over a decade ago, “nothing if not global in scope.”<sup>18</sup> In *The Cultural Cold War* Frances Stonor Saunders explores in detail an important element of these operations: the CIA’s secret program of cultural and ideological propaganda in Western Europe.<sup>19</sup> The centerpiece of this covert campaign, and the focus of Saunders’s study, was the Congress for Cultural Freedom, a purportedly private, but CIA-funded, organization that supported the work of anti-Communist liberals. The CIA connection behind the establishment of the Congress for Cultural Freedom was none other than Frank Wisner of the OPC. Not content with the secret war he was waging behind the Iron Curtain, Wisner set the CIA on a decades-long crusade to wage a covert propaganda campaign in the “free world.”

According to Saunders, the Congress for Cultural Freedom functioned as a clandestine endowment for the arts that promoted cultural, intellectual, and

16. It is difficult to arrive at precise statistics for the allocation of USIA resources because of vagueness, lack of precision, and inconsistencies in the USIA’s semiannual reports to Congress. Internal planning documents explaining USIA priorities are unavailable. The figures cited for the number of posts are from the agency’s December 1960 report to Congress, the only year this information was reported. My deduction of the relative size of the posts is based on funding as well as on the numbers of Americans and locals employed at each post as listed in the 1954 and 1955 reports to Congress. (These figures need to be weighed against the size of the country and currency conversion.) USIA 15th Report to Congress, July 1–December 31, 1960, Washington, DC; USIA 3rd Report to Congress, July–December 1954, Washington, DC; and USIA 4th Report to Congress, January 1–June 30, 1955 (Washington, DC). All are available at Jonsson Library, Stanford University, Stanford, CA.

17. Foreign Office, Information Policy Department Minutes, 12 April 1954, FO 953/1528, Public Record Office, Kew, U.K.

18. John Prados, *Presidents’ Secret Wars: CIA and Pentagon Covert Operations from World War II through the Persian Gulf*, Rev. Ed. (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1996), p. 83.

19. Saunders’s book was published in the United Kingdom as *Who Paid the Piper?: The CIA and the Cultural Cold War* (London: Granta Books, 1999).

artistic endeavors “in the West, *for* the West, in the name of freedom of expression” (p. 2). The CIA pumped tens of millions of dollars into the Congress for Cultural Freedom and related projects, making the agency, in Saunders’s words, “America’s Ministry of Culture” (p. 129). The Congress maintained offices in thirty-five countries and employed dozens of persons, including writers, poets, artists, historians, and scientists. It published over twenty prestigious magazines, held art exhibitions, owned a news and feature service, organized high-profile international conferences, and sponsored public performances by musicians and artists.

Saunders details CIA funding and promotion of a long list of noted intellectuals, including Melvin Lasky, Isaiah Berlin, Sidney Hook, Dwight Mac-Donald, Hannah Arendt, Vladimir Nabokov, Arthur Koestler, Raymond Aron, George Orwell, and many others. Among the magazines funded by the agency were *Survey*, *Preuves*, *Der Monat*, *Partisan Review*, and the highly respected *Encounter*. She also shows how the CIA covertly funded and distributed hundreds of books. For example, the influential compendium of liberal anti-Stalinist confessions, *The God That Failed*, “was as much a product of intelligence as it was a work of the intelligentsia” (p. 65).

The CIA also promoted traditional art forms. It subsidized symphonies, art exhibits, ballet performances, theater groups, operas, and jazz musicians to undermine the negative stereotypes prevalent in Western Europe about the cultural barrenness of the United States. Working in cooperation with the Museum of Modern Art, the CIA also promoted Abstract Expressionist painting as a counter to Socialist Realism and explicitly political art. To fund the cultural Cold War, the CIA maintained an elaborate network of dummy foundations, which were created expressly for the purpose of channeling CIA funds into various covert projects. Many of these foundations existed only on paper. The Farfield Foundation, for example, was a CIA front that became the principal conduit for CIA subsidies to the Congress for Cultural Freedom. According to Saunders, other foundations that served as conduits for CIA funds included Ford, Rockefeller, and J. M. Kaplan. CIA money also flowed through Time, Inc., the Metropolitan Opera, the Museum of Modern Art, Harper & Row, the Modern Languages Association, and the American Council of Learned Societies.

Beyond the mere act of subsidizing artistic creations that fit agency objectives, Saunders reveals that the CIA also worked to influence the content of cultural products shipped overseas. For example, CIA agent Carleton Altop worked undercover to introduce specific themes into Hollywood films and to remove images that might evoke a negative response abroad. In two examples cited by Saunders, Altop convinced casting directors to mute racial stereotypes in their pictures by including “well dressed negroes” as part of the Amer-

ican scene. At Alsop's request, blacks were planted in crowd scenes in the Jerry Lewis comedy "Caddy." Saunders comments sarcastically: "At a time when many 'negroes' had as much chance of getting into a golf club as they had of getting the vote, this seemed optimistic indeed" (p. 290). A more blatant case of CIA manipulation of film content occurred with the animated cartoon film of Orwell's *Animal Farm*. The agency rewrote the ending of the film to mute Orwell's symbolic conflation of capitalist exploiters and Stalinist revolutionaries.

These examples aside, the extent of CIA control over the intellectual freedom of the authors and artists on its payroll is unclear. Saunders believes that the CIA exerted tight political control over the intellectual agenda of the writers and artists it subsidized, but she offers scant evidence to support this conclusion. She provides only one example of outright censorship—that of an article submitted by Dwight MacDonald attacking American mass culture and materialism—and she shows that the CIA intervened to remove founding members Melvin Lasky and Arthur Koestler from their official positions in the organization's leadership. Wisner personally intervened to remove Lasky. Koestler was sidelined for being too passionate in his anti-Communism; the CIA believed that a moderate tone was needed to "win over the waverers" (p. 90). In general, however, the CIA mostly provided the *funds*, not the *ideas*. The agency preferred to subsidize ideas rather than censor them.

Still, regardless of the degree of intellectual freedom afforded the artists subsidized by the agency, it is clear that the CIA operatives who ran the programs saw themselves as propagandists involved in a war of ideas. CIA operatives spoke frankly about harnessing the energies of "intellectuals who were disillusioned, [or] who could be disillusioned" with Communism. The Congress for Cultural Freedom and numerous other intellectuals, artists, and nonprofit foundations were described by CIA operatives as "propaganda assets" (pp. 66, 83). Tom Braden, who ran the CIA's International Organizations Division, was unapologetically vocal in defending the agency's mission to support the non-Communist left—as his 1967 article "I'm Glad the CIA Is Immoral" pointed out in earnest.<sup>20</sup>

Saunders unfortunately approaches her subject with a crusading zeal that undermines the credibility of her narrative. Determined to expose and condemn the agency, she misses an important opportunity to articulate the broader significance of her research. This is regrettable because the book makes an important point—that the intellectual, artistic, ideological, and cultural planes were crucial battlefields of the Cold War.

---

20. Tom Braden, "I'm Glad the CIA Is 'Immoral,'" *The Saturday Evening Post*, 10 May 1967, p. 7.



The cultural and propaganda war abroad was complemented by a sizable effort to sell the Cold War to the American public—an aspect of Cold War history about which we know far too little. On this front Nancy Bernhard's *U.S. Television News and Cold War Propaganda* makes a truly significant contribution. Her groundbreaking book explores the relationship between government propaganda, private news organizations, and the construction of the "Cold War consensus" by documenting the collaboration between government propagandists and broadcast news organizations in promoting a bellicose form of anti-Communism in the United States. Bernhard argues that the leading television networks "marginalized alternative voices and helped to create and sustain Cold War orthodoxy" (p. 188).

A striking feature of U.S. news programming in the early Cold War, as anyone who has watched newsreels from the 1940s and 1950s has probably observed, was the simplistic and sensational nature with which broadcasts depicted the "red menace." If the tone may be fairly labeled "propagandistic," Bernhard shows that this was not entirely accidental; propaganda experts actively worked in concert with network television to paint a grim picture of international Communism in order to stimulate domestic morale. Two of Bernhard's best chapters investigate the activities of the public affairs offices of the State and Defense Departments. The Cold War was the most important news story of the 1940s and 1950s, Bernhard notes, and much of the news that appeared on television about the Cold War was scripted and produced by officials from the public affairs divisions. She shows that these officials equated public information with propaganda—they spoke often and unapologetically of "building awareness of the problem," of "psychological 'scare campaign[s]," and of manufacturing "a real and continuing crisis" to sustain public morale—and that they were remarkably effective in getting their messages on network television (p. 83–84).

In addition to routine news coverage, television presented the Cold War as a dramatic clash between good and evil in specialized magazine-style news programs such as *The Facts We Face*, *One Nation Indivisible*, and *Pentagon*. One of the most popular of these programs was *Battle Report—Washington*, which sought to give "the people of the United States a firsthand account of what the Federal Government is doing in the worldwide battle against communism" (p. 117). The program, which aired weekly on NBC for more than two years, was produced in the White House. It showed government footage of Communist activities, depicted U.S. defense preparations, and regularly interviewed generals, admirals, and high-ranking civilian officials who authori-

tatively defended U.S. Cold War policies. *Battle Report* followed a standard pattern: dire predictions of enemy intentions and capabilities were followed by reassuring descriptions of U.S. countermeasures to thwart Communist ambitions. It attempted to frighten its viewers and then to reassure them that American efforts (if consistently maintained) would effectively shield them from the Soviet menace. Communist leaders were routinely described as “the fourteen barbarians,” “power-drunk atheists,” “bloodthirsty barbarians,” and “power-drunk despots” (pp. 122, 130). One episode juxtaposed footage from a Communist youth rally in Berlin with images from the Nazi youth movement as the narrator commented: “The same place, Berlin, the same kids, German. . . . See any basic difference from the Nazi days?” (p. 123). Although *Battle Report* was, as Bernhard calls it, “textbook propaganda,” it was praised as public service broadcasting. According to Bernhard, it symbolized the extent to which “passionate anticommunism became normalized as objective” (p. 125).

Cold War propaganda came in the form of educational entertainment as much as news. In a fascinating chapter on the Defense Department’s domestic information programs, Bernhard shows how the department assisted the television networks in preparing documentary and dramatic productions based on military records. Several of these programs concerned imminent nuclear war and instructed the public on what to do in the event of a nuclear bomb attack. Other programs, such as *The Armed Forces Hour* and *The Big Picture*, recounted U.S. military victories from WWII and demonstrated U.S. preparedness for the next war. *The Big Picture*, produced by the U.S. army, was “one of the most widely televised public service programs in history” (p. 142). The show presented such varied topics as the organization of the army, the occupation of Berlin, West Point, Communist atrocities in Korea, and historical reenactments of great moments in military history. The lead narration each week proclaimed:

From Korea to Germany, from Alaska to Puerto Rico, all over the world the United States Army is alert to defend our country—you the American people—against aggression. This is the *Big Picture*, an official television report to the nation from the United States Army. (p. 143)

As the opening narrative suggests, many of these programs were sensationally militaristic and promoted a crisis mentality. The Columbia Broadcasting System aired a series in 1957 entitled *Conquest of the Air*. The first episode, narrated by Walter Cronkite, simulated “The Day North America Is Attacked.” Generals played themselves in a mock attack staged at the Continental Air Defense Command, while across the screen a message advised: “AN ATTACK IS NOT TAKING PLACE. THIS IS A MILITARY EXERCISE”

(pp. 147–148). According to Bernhard, shows such as this deliberately “promoted American military supremacy and reinforced the axiomatic need to arm the national security state” (p. 133).

These programs were made possible by a cooperative relationship between government officials and representatives of powerful media organizations in the United States. Government officials reviewed scripts, provided footage, developed ideas for stories, subsidized production costs, and, in some cases, produced whole programs with only a minimum of assistance from the networks. In return, the television networks received free or inexpensive programming and fulfilled their patriotic duty in a time of national emergency. This collaboration between government propaganda specialists and private news organizations was shielded from the public by the idea of the “free press,” which held that because news organizations were privately controlled, they were free from government manipulation. Yet, Bernhard notes, the press was not as free or objective as it liked to claim: “The state controlled virtually all breaking security news, strict codes of objectivity excused journalists from evaluating official statements, and anyone who contradicted policy statements risked charges of subversion” (p. 74). Even when television networks were not airing programs produced by the government, broadcasters, according to Bernhard, “simply parroted official information” and “habitually moralized and deliberately oversimplified the contest between East and West” (pp. 49, 12). Bernhard suggests that government and industry professionals “clearly knew” they violated precepts of a free and independent press but that they justified it to themselves as a necessary patriotic duty in a fearsome age. State-private cooperation in selling the Cold War did not arise from some sort of grand conspiracy, Bernhard stresses, but from a system of institutional interests that benefited both parties and from shared beliefs in the necessity of the anti-Communist crusade.

Taken together, the books by Saunders and Bernhard raise important questions about the broader cultural context of the Cold War. Both show that although the United States championed the free marketplace of ideas, the market was not as free as it appeared. Both books highlight the importance of looking at the state, based on research in government documents, when analyzing Cold War ideology and culture—something that cultural historians have too often hesitated to do.



Scholars will find the books by the three professional historians—Mitrovich, Lucas, and Bernhard—more useful than the journalistic accounts written by Grose, Puddington, and Saunders. The latter group of authors provide many

fascinating details, but are more interested in praising or condemning their subjects than in providing in-depth analysis. More seriously, the narratives by Grose and Saunders are confusingly organized and at times difficult to follow. On several occasions I found myself rereading a section or a chapter merely to understand the basic sequence of events. For books that were aimed at a popular audience, this is a startling weakness. Puddington's book, by contrast, is superbly written and thoroughly documented. The many valuable details and interesting anecdotes make for a compelling narrative. It clearly demonstrates that RFE and RL were important instruments of U.S. foreign policy. The book smacks a bit of Cold War triumphalism—Puddington insists that RFE and RL deserve at least partial credit for “winning” the Cold War—but it is a useful counterweight to most of the other works reviewed here, which are perhaps too critical and, at times, even polemical. Future historians would do well to strike a balance between the self-congratulatory approach of Puddington and the zealously critical approach of Saunders.

Mitrovich's *Undermining the Kremlin*, although at times bogged down in dense details of bureaucratic infighting and NSC policy-paper drafting, is an essential source for anyone interested in U.S. foreign policy during the early Cold War. At several critical junctures he challenges accepted orthodoxy and revises conventional wisdom. Although many scholars will undoubtedly question some of these revisions, the book is a refreshing break from the conventional narratives of the period.

Scott Lucas's account, too, deserves serious attention. Lucas made some unusual writing decisions, including an odd variation in chapter length (one chapter is only three pages long), but *Freedom's War* is well-researched and clearly written. The book is 300 pages long with tiny font, but I was left wanting more. Examining U.S. foreign policy on multiple levels—from high-level decision making to operational implementation to private involvement—the book paints a complex picture of U.S. foreign relations rarely found in the huge body of literature on the Cold War. For this reason alone, *Freedom's War* should be required reading for first-year graduate students in U.S. foreign relations. Its investigation of the involvement of private groups in U.S. propaganda campaigns adds an important dimension to historical understanding of life and culture in the United States during the Cold War that will interest a wide audience.

All of these books should inspire new research in any number of different directions. Nancy Bernhard's study in particular raises fascinating questions about the ideological and cultural atmosphere of the 1940s and 1950s. She demonstrates a clear connection between the activities of government propagandists and the news and information received by the public during the early Cold War, a finding that highlights the importance of looking at the state.



Bernhard's research also calls attention to the ways in which historians can benefit from adopting an interdisciplinary approach, incorporating the questions and methodologies used by communication specialists.<sup>21</sup> We need many more studies like this one that investigate the complex relationship between the media, popular attitudes, and government intervention. If nothing else, today's world of spin doctors and image consultants makes Bernhard's study both timely and relevant.

All of the authors make excellent use of new documents and other sources that were not available to researchers during the Cold War, but they also provide fresh reinterpretations of sources that have been available to historians for some time. The books offer a portrait of U.S. foreign relations that is very different from the standard view that government representatives were merely trying to negotiate with other allied, neutral, and enemy governments. "Traditional" diplomatic activities existed side-by-side with psychological warfare and covert operations designed to undermine enemy governments and manipulate public opinion in friendly and neutral countries. The books reviewed here thus serve as important reminders that the best of the "new" Cold War history need not be exclusively *international* history. If anything, they indicate that the questions typically addressed by scholars writing the new international history—questions that usually focus on traditional diplomacy and long-standing historiographical debates—must be balanced with questions addressing the propaganda, psychological, cultural, and ideological dimensions of the Cold War. In this field, too, there is much exciting work to be done and many surprises to be encountered.

---

21. Some of the most conceptually rich and important work on U.S. propaganda has been written by communications specialists. See for example, Martin J. Medhurst, "Eisenhower's 'Atoms for Peace' Speech: A Case Study in the Strategic Use of Language," in Martin J. Medhurst, ed., *Cold War Rhetoric: Strategy, Metaphor, and Ideology* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990), pp. 29–50; Martin J. Medhurst, "Atoms for Peace and Nuclear Hegemony: The Rhetorical Structure of a Cold War Campaign," *Armed Forces and Society*, Vol. 24, No. 4 (Summer 1997), pp. 571–593; Martin J. Medhurst, ed., *Eisenhower's War of Words: Rhetoric and Leadership* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1994), pp. 137–156; Shawn J. Parry-Giles, "The Eisenhower Administration's Conceptualization of the USIA: The Development of Overt and Covert Propaganda Strategies," *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (Spring 1994), pp. 263–276; and Shawn J. Parry-Giles, "'Camouflaged' Propaganda: The Truman and Eisenhower Administrations' Covert Manipulation of News," *Western Journal of Communication*, Vol. 60, No. 2 (Spring 1996), pp. 146–167.